



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM  
GOVERNOR

THOMAS D. WATKINS, JR.  
SUPERINTENDENT OF  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Local Education Agencies and Public School Academy Principals

**FROM:** Tom Watkins

**DATE:** September 18, 2003

**SUBJECT:** 56<sup>th</sup> Annual Michigan Youth in Government Program

On March 10-14 and March 24-28, 2004, 1600 Michigan high school students, teachers, YMCA leaders and government advisors will convene at the state capitol for the 56<sup>th</sup> annual Michigan YMCA Youth in Government Program. This information can be accessed on the Michigan Department of Education's Home Page; [www.mi.gov/mde](http://www.mi.gov/mde) under "What's New?" The program duplicates as nearly as practicable the state's political/government process. Students choose to be representatives and senators or serve as legislative support staff and members of the executive branch of government. They deliberate on proposed legislation, which they have written in their hometowns. The three and one-half-day program is perhaps the best method for young people to understand the complexities of state government, and the qualities of principle centered leadership where the values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility are taught.

This year, fall conferences are being held in September and October in Ishpeming, Mt. Pleasant, Battle Creek and Livonia to prepare for the spring programs. In these sessions, the youth will elect a speaker of the house, Lt. governor, freshmen speaker, sophomore Lt. governor and chaplain to preside in Lansing. A youth governor will also be elected in each district to run for election when all the groups convene in Lansing.

In addition to the legislative and executive branches, students may participate in the Model Judicial Program (MJP). Cases are tried using the mock court trial process, the same process used in law schools. The mock trial team from Coldwater High School took third place at the ABA National Mock Trial competition. The competition was held in Williamsburg, Virginia this summer.

In the summer of 2004, the youth governor will attend the National Youth Governor's Conference in Washington, D.C. and will have the opportunity to meet with the President, cabinet officers, senators, and representatives, Supreme Court Justices, and other government officials. Students also have an opportunity to attend the YMCA's Conference on National Affairs held at Black Mountain, North Carolina the last week in June.

Each high school in Michigan is invited to participate. Delegates are chosen by student councils or by government classes, YMCA's and other youth-serving agencies. Most schools begin their preparations early in the fall for the September and October fall conferences.

I would urge your school district to participate in this outstanding program. Please make your initial arrangements for materials as soon as possible by contacting the office listed on this website [www.myig.org](http://www.myig.org) or email [myig@charter.net](mailto:myig@charter.net). You will then be contacted directly and will be given all the information you need to get your students involved in this national recognized program. For questions please call 517/639-4480.

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